January 9, 1966

Dear Harold:

Inasmuch as I owe you a couple of letters I was further shamed by those that arrived from you this morning. So I am getting off this reply straightaway.

I think first of all it should be said that the reactions to the Lomax show were mixed as I expected they would be. I think, too, everyone felt you were a model of poise, control and forebearance until the penultimate moment. You made your case with a minimum of histrionics and a maximum of good sense, logic and persuasiveness. Lomax, on the other hand, came off very badly. He exposed himself for what he is and I shall not dignify that by the unkind words required for such a characterization. But it was not a fruitful exchange due to the basic condition: a moderator(sic) predisposed to an untenable position which he sought to advance in a way that was personally crude, unattractive and dishonest. So we had what might be called a negative victory here. My father criticized me for putting you on that show, but I countered with the argument that it was on this show that we had to make some kind of rebuttal to Liebler. I think all the other appearances speak for themselves and for the most part were consistently effective. I missed hearing the two interviews that I did with you, but the personnel at the station were most impressed. And that is the best compliment one can get coming as it does from the employees of the station who can be quite jaded with all they have to listen to.

Sylvia Meagher may or may not come to Los Angeles. It depends on the getting of her manuscript with citations and addenda to the publisher. Yes it was welcome news that she was lucky to get a publisher! She was hoping to go to Victoria, B.C., but that too is in doubt. Penn may be there now. He phoned Maggie to tell her he would be in Los Angeles on Wednesday of this week for a couple of days. I'm sure he will have a great deal to tell on the Ruby death and its peripheral areas.

Joseph Ball gave a news conference here that I was unable to cover; Maggie went in my place and it was the same old stuff on the case. The critics were excoriated and chastised. The Chief Justice was celebrated and exhaltated as a semi-devinity. Everything was dealt with as absolutes. He did concede the possiblity of a second assassin from the rear (firing on the 6th floor that is) if the Zapruder film could be proven to show that Connally was hit by a separate shot. He is personally satisfied that it cannot be so proven. He further said the Commission's working papers are now availble to scholars in the archives.

I am glad you have finally seen the light with reference to Messers. Schiller, Lewis and company. They are real bums and deserve fully the epithets you apply to them. For me the payoff came the afternoon of the Joe Pyne interview when it was immediately transparent that Schiller had made available to Pyne the confidential transcript that "had been stolen from the safe"(sic). The rather pained expression on my face for the next 12 to 20 hours was due to the fact that you had acceded in granting an exclusive to Pyne for Whitewash III!

Maggie has written a letter to Capitol Records that her hysband won't let her send, but yours is the most choice. Small satisfaction when one realizes what they have done to all of us.

I should really appreciate any questions you might like me to put to either Ball, Liebler or anyone else on the Commission Staff. I shall be interviewing the first two named within the next few weeks and am compiling a list myself. But the news from Ray that Ball and Belin drafted a memorandum of some length arguing Oswald's innocence is most interesting. If Marcus Raskin or you could detail this to me in writing and permit me to put this question to Ball I would be most grateful.

The book "Seventy Hours and Thirty Minutes" has reappeared on the book racks again in a newly revised edition. It was withdrawn last summer after it was issued very briefly in a different format. The new one contains pictures and some we haven't seen before and is essential I suppose as part of our catalogue of memorabilia. It would pay to make a close comparison of the two to see if anything has been edited out in the newer version.

Lillian Castellano and I discussed your point about 317 coming immediately before 313. She feels the obvious internal evidence makes you wrong. She uses as her guide in this determination the photos on pages 70 and 71 of volume XVIII: The girl in the background (Willis' daughter perhaps) casts a shadow to her right that extends gradually into the portion of the photograph that lies in the area bounded at top and bottom by the sprocket holes of each frame. In 313 the shadow is only a small fraction of an inch from the line (for want of a better term) at the left, in frame 315, which should come next sequentially the shadow has extended over into this "other area", in frame 314 it has extended even more and in frame 316 further still. In frame 317 the girls head is closer to the sprocket hole at the top of the picture and by 318 it has been obliterated by the hole. So only 314 and 315 are out of order unless we miss something that you see and we don't. Wasn't there correspondence on this between Hoover and David Lifton? Doesn't the Commission acknowledge this error?

I am delighted (we all are, actually) about the news of a second printing for "Whitewash" and its appearance in England as a paperback. The latter is really an important development.

Gave Ray your message about the pictures and Maggie assures me that if "you still want the scarf, she will send one". I think part of the confusion was due to the note in one letter in which you said, in effect,'forget it', as you had purchased a book for your Lil instead. It is kindof out of my hands now as Maggie insists she will take care of it and yet probably has delayed doing so. Sorry about this.

Penn is supposed to be here on Wednesday from somewhere, but we have nothing definite. Mort Sahl hasn't answered my letters. I thanked him for having you on. Ray is supposed to go on and will also do a Joe Dolan show in San Francisco next week. Lillian will attend the Arnoni lecture Saturday and then Maggie's reception for him afterward.

Best wish,
Bill

P.S. Liebler declined categorically to be interviewed by me this afternoon